



# REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SIXTY-SECOND REGULAR SESSION  
GENERAL DEBATE

## STATEMENT

by

**H.E. MR. BORIS TADIĆ**  
**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**

New York, 27 September 2007

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be presented the opportunity to address, on behalf of the Republic of Serbia, the General Assembly of the United Nations, the highest body of the world family of sovereign nations.

I extend my congratulations to United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon on the election to his very responsible duty. Also, I congratulate the newly-elected President of the General Assembly, Mr. Srdjan Kerim, who hails from our region, South Eastern Europe.

Serbia attaches exceptional importance to the role that the world Organization, the Security Council in particular, plays in maintaining international peace and security, as well as in safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the United Nations member-States. Proceeding from the Charter of the United Nations as the cornerstone of the present-day international legal order, Serbia calls for its consistent implementation.

The sixty-second session of the General Assembly is taking place at a very important moment for Serbia as the negotiation process on the future status of its Province of Kosovo and Metohija is under way. Proceeding from a firm position that the independence of Kosovo is unacceptable for Serbia, we have offered to Kosovo Albanians special rights and competences for an autonomous development of their community within the Republic of Serbia.

In defence of the State sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia, our negotiating team has offered a decentralization model based on European solutions that would protect the interests of Kosovo Albanians, as well as the threatened interests of the Serbian and other non-Albanian ethnic communities in the Province, in an effective way.

Serbia offers solutions that would solve, through mutual agreement and with the implementation of European values and rules, an old inter-ethnic conflict for good and open the prospects of reconciliation and co-existence within a modern, democratic and European Serbia. My country is ready for a compromise, yet we would like to point out that the legitimate interests of democratic Serbia and the specific needs of the threatened Serbian community in the Province, as well as other communities that have fallen victim to expulsion, such as Roma and Gorani communities, must be respected.

Let me recall: more than 200 000 Serbs have left Kosovo since 1999. To-date, according to the official UNHCR data, only 7 100 of them have returned.

Today, the negotiations take place under the auspices of the Contact Group, but a legitimate decision on the future status of Kosovo can be brought only by the Security Council of the United Nations. Only a decision to be taken by this institution may be based on international law.

Persistent in our request that the territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia be respected, we call for the attainment of a compromise solution through diplomatic, legal and peaceful means and not through war and violence. It is exactly for these reasons that democratic Serbia does not accept that the threat of violence of the party we are negotiating with is an argument for re-drawing the borders of legitimate democracies and for violating the norms of international law. My country therefore is steadfast in warning of the unforeseeable consequences of this unprincipled and dangerous policy and remains committed to a quest for a peaceful and compromise solution through dialogue and with full respect for the Charter of the United Nations.

Serbia would also like to recall that threats have been bandied about of late that the Kosovo provisional institutions will declare independence on 11 December unilaterally. We point this out because of the fact that, following a one-sided recognition of Kosovo's independence, the international legal order would never be the same, while many separatist movements world over would use the newly-established precedent. Many regions in the world would be destabilized in that way.

We therefore call on the legitimate representatives of Kosovo Albanians to proceed to the resumed negotiations without prejudging the outcome, so that a compromise solution, acceptable to both parties, could be achieved, a solution that would lead to long-term Serbian/Albanian reconciliation.

Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year, Serbia presides over the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. In this capacity, we have made every effort to render a maximum contribution to the strengthening of democracy, protection of human rights and the rule of law, the basic values of the oldest pan-European organization. Likewise, we have sought to strengthen synergy between the Council of Europe and the United Nations, especially in the field of human rights.

The strategic interest of Serbia is to become a member of the European Union. We work hard to become a candidate member by the end of 2008. We are engaged in the process of Euro-Atlantic integrations, in the Partnership for Peace programme. In that way, we have evinced patently our acceptance of European values, as well as our readiness to develop our country in accordance with the highest European standards.

We are convinced that European perspective of the entire Western Balkans is the most effective way to stabilize the situation and accelerate development of all countries

in the region. Only in that way shall we overcome the problems inherited from the past and encourage the spirit of tolerance and the feeling of commitment to the same goals and values, which will provide a basis for building stable and lasting peace in our region.

Unfortunately, the question of war crimes continues to burden the relations among Balkan countries. For its part, Serbia has done all within its powers to track down, arrest and transfer to The Hague those accused of war crimes, demonstrating in that way its commitment to bringing cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia to a successful end. This is not only Serbia's international obligation; above all, this is what we owe to ourselves, as well as to our neighbours. By punishing criminals and building a stable and prosperous region, our common space integrated in the European Union, we can ensure a better future for all citizens.

Yet, it is with pleasure and optimism that we can note that, step by step, South Eastern Europe is becoming a region of good-neighbourliness and cooperation. There exist numerous examples of very successful initiatives and concrete forms of cooperation, the contribution of which to the promotion of peace and mutual trust is exceptionally important. There is hardly any field in which we have not established a mechanism of mutual cooperation yet. This proves unequivocally that this is a lasting, strategic orientation of all countries in the Balkans, a reflection of their common aspiration for a full inclusion of our region into European integrations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Global problems call for global answers; this makes it incumbent on all member-States to participate actively in their solution. Today, as we are facing completely new and specific challenges that threaten international peace and security and pose a threat to overall development and prosperity, we are increasingly becoming aware of the great need for the United Nations, perhaps greater than ever before.

Terrorism is one of the greatest scourges of the present-day world. In order to fight and eradicate it effectively, we must take a global, coordinated approach, as well as vigorous actions at regional and country levels. Last year, Serbia hosted the regional summit meeting on terrorism, organized crime and corruption.

As can be seen, we cooperate very closely with our neighbours in order to forestall threats; an excellent example of the cooperation has been the recent joint exercise of the Armies of Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria which provided abundant evidence of our three countries' collective readiness to combat terrorism and any other threat to the security of their citizens.

Serbia also initiated the signing of an agreement with neighbour countries on cooperation in the protection against natural disasters. The recent catastrophic fires that engulfed Greece and the manner in which we reacted provided eloquent proof of the vital importance of mutual dependence and solidarity in the Balkan region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Numerous crisis spots continue to plague the world: some are dormant, some escalate, while some others threaten to provoke conflicts of unforeseeable consequences, destruction and humanitarian catastrophes. Our experience so far makes us believe ever more firmly that lasting, just and stable peace and security can be achieved only peacefully, through dialogue, mutual respect and cooperation.

Serbia believes that the United Nations continues to be an irreplaceable international authority and mechanism for the prevention of crises and the resolution of conflicts. Successful and timely deployment of United Nations peacekeeping forces is an important aspect of the maintenance of international peace and security. We support the efforts of the Organization to further strengthen the efficiency of its peacekeeping capacities.

Serbia therefore considers that only gathered together on common goals and objectives and united in action we can make a vigorous stand against global threats to international peace and security: terrorism, bellicose extremism, mass poverty, organized crime, pandemic diseases and harmful consequences of climate change.

Global warming is surely a major problem of our age and it rightly figures as one of the central topics on the agenda of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. This phenomenon which, arguably, may affect entire mankind knows no national borders and circumvents no part of the world. To solve it, therefore, we must address it very seriously as it brooks no delay and all United Nations member-States must get onboard. Within the Belgrade Initiative, Serbia has proposed that activities to stop global warming be carried out also at the regional level and that a Regional Centre for South Eastern Europe be set up in Belgrade to that end. We also emphasized that plans to reduce harmful emissions must take into consideration the level of economic development of various countries as well.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The complex of relations among different cultures, civilizations and religions is also a question that deserves to be in the focus of the attention of the United Nations. A truly multi-ethnic, multi-confessional and multi-cultural country, Serbia fully understands all the sensitivity of these questions and treats them with due attention. We are well aware that the world of the twenty-first century must not be based on intolerance on any ground. We, the leaders of the United Nations member-States, are entrusted with great responsibility to invest every effort to make sure that all the diversity of this world be comprehended and accepted as the wealth of all, rather than the cause of new divisions. Indeed, dialogue and mutual tolerance must prevail as the basic principles of our mutual relations, both within States and internationally.

As a responsible member of the world community and international organizations, Serbia fully respects the Charter of the United Nations and the international legal order

established by the Charter. Building a truly democratic society in our own country, we call for democratization of international relations on the basis of a strict implementation of the Charter and other generally accepted norms and standards.

We firmly believe that only equitable cooperation among countries and peoples, respect for basic human rights and fundamental freedoms and mutual trust guarantee stable international peace and security.

At the same time, short of political stability and economic prosperity of States, there is no successful cooperation at bilateral, regional and global levels. The precondition for the stability and a dynamic economic development is an equal access to new technologies and modern scientific achievements.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Serbia is willing and ready to take, along with other countries, active engagement in the process of United Nations reform and revitalization in order to make the world Organization capable of facing the challenges of our times effectively. Our historic responsibility is to ensure future generations a much better environment than the one in which we live today.

It is my country's lasting commitment to strive to achieve the goals and objectives of the United Nations and, along with other countries, it is ready to work on further strengthening the integrity of the world Organization under its Charter.

Thank you.